



The Register VOLUME CXXX | WINTER ISSUE

The Register is published twice a year by the students of the Boston Latin School. Students in Classes I through VI are invited to submit their original writing and artwork. Pieces are selected by the Editorial Board of *The Register* on the basis of quality, not name recognition; the writers of all pieces remain anonymous to the Editorial Board during the selection process to ensure that no one is given an unfair advantage.

The Register

BOSTON LATIN SCHOOL Volume CXXX | Issue I Winter 2009

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Camera Obscura

Your shoulder blades, I think. Or your wrists.

The camera is heaver than it ought to be. A real beast, a relic—spoils from his younger years, when his life was what he wanted and there were fewer letters in the mail. A true machine, from the years before chips and pixels, before people could only believe what they see. It's heavy and hard in my hands; my fingers strain, my wrist shudders with the weight of it. Slowly, it climbs to my eye, clawing at my arms, clambering over the air. I look through.

What do I see through this lens, this tapestry of glass? Nothing more. There's a city of metal underneath the skin of the beast—twisting, heaving muscles working to bring me the world essentially as I see it through my own eyes, but structured, built, and bounded. There's so much of the rest of the world when I look through my own eyes—enough to smother. The silken street below swallows me up; the gauzy air gags my view—I drown in the mass of information. But with my machine, I inhale each moment as quickly as I can; my lens clatters open and shut with the rhythm of my lungs, my heart beats at the shutter, desperate to breathe it all, to taste the air from every angle.

There's a lot of you. A lot of angles, a lot of air. You take big steps, you say big things, you think big thoughts. The camera, the seeing of everything, isn't for you; you don't want to see everything, to taste everything, but you have to empty your heart of everything you've seen, felt, tasted, and thought, as quickly as you can, because more is always coming. I'm being smothered by the outside world; you're drowning in yourself.

The flat grey glass of the morning will be broken soon—the wool will be torn, snagged with flakes of gold and peach, like fingers curling around a flame. But for now, the rain comes down thick, heavy and empty, solid all the way through. The sky is so light the drops seem to come from nowhere, springing to life at the tops of the trees. I stand under the lip of the roof and look up. Drops speed toward my face, roaring past to shatter on the steps. You pound up the path, soaked through and shaking, and I laugh.

You're wordless, panting. Water drips from every point and peak on your body; beads tremble, precarious as leaves, along the edges of you. You cave your chest inward, spine curved like a crane, and your head hangs down, hair falling in cataracts across your face. My heart pounds on the shutter; my lungs drag on the light. When you look up, my lens melts away.

It's not pretty, your face, but it's beautiful. What did I call it? A rhapsody of movement, or something like that, but that doesn't catch it. With so much to convey, to feel and think in every second, it contorts and twists into a grotesque mask that barely resembles the real thing. Now, though, out of breath, out of words, drinking in the tart, damp air, you're the

real thing. Your mouth hangs open. Your skin is pale and gleaming with the wet, but cold tints it to match the soaking scarlet linens behind you; your eyes are bright, bottomless pools of woolen sky, searching, wide, asking more questions that I can answers.

It's over in a second. You bring a hand up to your face and sweep back the cascade, you take a breath and close your mouth, shaking the drops of rare solemnity away. The twisting, the coiling, the clenching of muscle and bone begins again, and your face is lost in everything you have to say. Any picture of your face now is just a picture of your mask—for you I look somewhere else.

Your wrists, I think. Or your shoulder blades.

Your hands are constantly moving, too, an artist's hands, lithe and gracefully tumbling. Even when they hang at your side (rarely) they're stroking ivory keys, coaxing our beautiful clumsy chords. At rest they tilt downward, exposing the milky white point of bone at the joint—that inch of skin is the most perfect thing I've ever seen. When your mask is on, though, your hands and wrists become just another part of the masquerade; not twisted and mangled to the same extent, but the movements are overly large, unnecessary. They're no longer pure, no longer perfect. Not your wrists, I think.

Your shoulders, though, are beyond masquerade. They're the one part of your body you're unaware of—the angles, the gorgeous curve of them, the shadows in the fabric, those you can't control. Your shoulder blades, like the bases of wings, are the most expressive part of you, but they don't leak false sentiment. The groan of muscle along bone, the flex of your spine—more is in that than a thousand pairs of narrowed eyes, a million pairs of waving hands. Your shoulder blades are you, as you know yourself, as I know you. You walk past me into the kitchen, and my lens shutters shut.

-Anonymous



Photograph Hazel Manko, I



The World, Acrylic on canvas Huy Vo, I



The world is merely a tiny jeweled charm upon a golden plaited chain and there it hangs so carelessly Quivering in its perpetual orbit for even the slightest tug can break its hold And even the slightest breath can knock it off its course.

A long time ago,
When the charm was newly molten and engraved and cut,
Its rolling emerald hills out in fresh freeness across its face
And the fierce sapphire oceans spit
their foam across the beaches of mica
The world spun in happy youth upon its chain and every
turn was new.

Yet all things age and dry out—
Even he boldest of the worlds, is tiny trees fell in bounty
upon the faded grasses
And the sprawling brown shores grew smaller
As the choking waters closed over them.

How sad it was to see the jewels chip and the chain rust and the little charm spin in its orbit of always.

-Adrianna Lasso-Harrier, III



Photograph Beata Coloyan, II

poet

without a cause

Dead lobe, no hope for this goner No he's empty wasn't he always the only feeling is peeling off, flakes of joy eaten up, no cares a laughter is empty the rage is cool Grab hold of such and much, nay little yet these fingers slip and slide, to hide again in his mind. For it's all thought no action, all talk. So what else begets no fault so he is the highest ultimate coward true in term a storm of nothing no powder in his wet poems No fire flows, burning injustice No it stands cold, nothing bold and all the empathy he feels is for apathy The dull-eyed stoic the most useless of all the fireless bystander Yes! Is he not? All that is described the poet without a cause

-Rich Liang, II



Pond Pinhole, Photograph Cynthia Poon, I

pappap

It is surreal, when everything either makes sense or doesn't have to. Watching from a distance to take a breather. When you watch the whole picture, puzzle pieces like computer chips that make up the world. It's when I think of you. You ate the same food for breakfast since my mother was born, and you worked the same two jobs for twenty years. You shared a bed with the same woman for 55 years. If that's not admirable, I don't know what is.

Losing Gramma and losing you are two different hards, two different hurts, and I couldn't compare them, not even at 35,000 feet above altitude, encased in darkness, music clotting my tears. Or causing them.

Hey.

I miss you.

I want you back by the time I'm sixteen. I'll just close my eyes and let you come in, okay?

Stepping into your closet of clothes, I fell. Staring down all your caps, your T-shirts, your khakis. I smelled everything. Is there a way to preserve a smell?

Stepping into your closet of favorites, the room you came to breathe, I broke. Everything is here: the music, the art...Only after you left did I find your record player, your vinyl, your tapes. Frank Sinatra Louis Armstrong. Jazz Ragtime Dixieland, all that. I listened and listened...Just grazing, circulate, mop up the mess I leave, clean you till you shine. That flower that I painted with you sometime long ago, colors perfect. That watercolor you did—old men play

with dice at the table. A classic caricature. Your photos neatly matted along the walls, one by one. Your autobiography on a single wall. What matters to you?

On your "rolley top" desk: The calculator that prints receipts. You were the customer and I gave you your taxes. Remember when Nate took it apart and couldn't put it back together agan? You weren't even angry. Because that's just who you were.

I cried for two days, couldn't stop, couldn't control, couldn't believe it. Nope. I felt raw. No more memories. It's the sudden stop of new memories that scares me. What if I forget? What if everyone forgets? What if the impression just isn't enough? Doesn't everyone want to matter?

The way you talked. The way you smiled. The way you laughed. I will remember most the way you laughed.

I have your blue eyes, your left hand, your love for music and talent for art. I'm not ashamed of telling that. A consolation prize. I'll have you inside me forever, I don't even care about its platitudes. And when I watch the world from way up high, amid the drop in the cabin pressure, the turbulence, the crackling voices of machines on the flight back home, I find that you're not out there. You're in here. You're right here.

-Lily Burger, III



Untimeliness, Colored pencil Zoe Li, IV

UNTITLED

The writer would like to dedicate this poem to her great-grandmother, who recently died of Alzheimer's disease. Alzheimer's is a disease that leads to a slow deterioration of the mind and memory.

Did you remember me?

Little girl, little smile,

knew the real you for a while.

Did you remember me?

Little girl, teddy bear

told me Grandpa will always care.

Did you remember me?

Little girl, inside joke

It was real, now it's smoke.

Did you remember me?

Little girl, reach for the tap

(right is cold,) sat on your lap.

Did you remember me?

Your little girl, though time's passed on.

I'll remember you when you're gone.

I'll remember you.

—Caitlin Healey, I

FATHERLESS CHILD

As I sit and study my mother's dating record I realize these alpha dogs were puppies Lucky I wasn't mature because I would cure my mother's depression by teaching these cowards a lesson First and foremost my father, also known as my sperm donor Looked up to him till I was like 8 when he basically kicked me to the corner Yeah I look like you smile like you I even wield the same last name as you but don't think I'm going to act like you Because you are not a man How can a man sleep not knowing if his child is alive How can you call yourself a man when you left your child waiting because you said you would give him a ride. How can a man refuse to support his own son I'm done hoping you would change your ways I'll be there for mami until she sees better days In my arms she was carried until the day she remarried The days they were married I literally could have tallied I don't call you my father so don't call me your son I'll never look up to a fool who once held a gun If he's gone let him leave him He is not the air she needs to breathe My sweater is still damp from the time she cried on my sleeve Married twice in one life to two boys who were claimed were men An adolescent with a mother in therapy a father nonexistent My mind was my guide so my thoughts were not restricted This misconception is getting stale See to be a man it takes more than being male So to all my dudes out there boasting about your size You need to realize these lines that lay between the lines All I had was my mother and my intelligence hence The reason I write, how I'm focused on doing it right

I might be young but I'm the closest thing to a man a boy can be

—Joshua Mejia, I

The Verdict

We haven't seen each other in a while. She's taller than I remembered. Her hair is pulled haphazardly from her face. Her face itself is drawn and carefully blank. I almost clapped after she finished. But then I realized that it wasn't a stage, and that her speech, her dark and nearly flawless speech was made against me. It wasn't pretend anymore, no more practices, no more second chances. It's over now. And now, at the end, I remember the beginning very clearly. I remember the little things about her that still hasn't changed. Her introduction was clipped. Her voice had developed coarse-ness. And she is so much better than I remembered.

But I don't remember her much. We spent so much of our time together; I had problems trying to distinguish her from myself. I was so used to her that I never really thought of her as an individual person with their own hopes and dreams and faults and fears. She was a part of me. My best friend. My sister. My partner in crime. Her value as a person has never been evaluated in my mind. I'm proud of her. I'm so proud of her. She's better than I remembered; she's a better person than I could have hoped for.

I stand up. I flow through the beginning of my statement, my introduction of the bare bones of this trial, the witnesses, the suspects, the way that life had thrown them together; the truths, the lies, the reasons, the purpose. This wasn't pretend. This time someone else's life mattered. As I move through my speech, I glance at her. Was this my fault? Maybe if I wasn't so selfish, so used to winning. Maybe if I had appreciated her for who she was and who she would become, it wouldn't have come to this.

How could you have said such things, B? How could you do that to me? How could you go against truth and friendship and everything we've ever believed in? Or perhaps, everything we used to believe in. Or perhaps everything I had believed in alone. I'm sorry. Can you hear me, B? I'm so sorry. Looking at you now, seeing the person you've become...you deserve more it than I do. Maybe you always have. You deserve to win, you've worked so hard and you've been through so much. And although we were always together, I had always been so damn selfish. You deserve it because you deserve to finally see the light that exists apart from my shadow.

I turn to you briefly, as I pause in my closing statements. I panel the room slowly and deliberately and you stare obstinately ahead as if I never turned to you, as if you never knew, as if you never really saw me too. This isn't about us. Someone else matters.

If not for my sake, than for him. He is innocent, you know he is. And I'm sorry for what happened, for how I treated you. But this time we can't afford to let ourselves stray from the truth. I'm sorry, B.

I sit down. The courtroom falls silent and reflective. His hands are shaking. He's praying right





The Building, Watercolor Huy Vo, I

now, though I can't hear what he's saying, rapidly and silently and he is so scared because he knows that his life hangs in the balance. I look ahead. The jury returns. It's over now. The verdict has been reached. And everything, everything I've hoped for and everything I've ever believed in is hanging in the balance. The verdict has been reached and even though you deserve it just as much as he does...I don't know what to believe in anymore. You deserve to win and he deserves to live. And you both deserve so much more than I can give. And I'm so scared for him. He's just a child, barely an adult, in a harsh reality. He's lost and scared and furthermore, he's alone. And so were you. And I'm sorry, B. I'm so sorry. Things should have been different.

"We, the jury, find the defendant..."

The faint clink of my briefcase echoes in my mind. I stare ahead.

It was exactly what I thought it would be.

-Lisa Wang, II

{FIREWORKS (Chi-Chi's Song)}

Your fireworks
And shooting stars
Comfort those in need
Of a guiding touch
Your fireworks
And shooting stars
Light up the sky,
Create smiles
You bless the world
With your fireworks

Looking up at the sky
All my worries, fears
They just fly away
Then everything's okay
And,
Feeling the cool night air
Cloudy, clear skies
You don't seem to care
This feeling can't compare

And I know
That it's you
Because the way I feel
When I look
And I see
Your fireworks...

It's like your smiling down on me

RIP Ukaoma Amarachi Abajue 10/6/2003—7/3/2006

-Kenechukwu Abajue Umeh, IV



East, Watercolor on cold-pressed paper Jasmyne Raneri, I



Winter's Remedy, Pencil Tammy Wu, IV

≈ scrapbook ≪

Looking through my scrapbook, counting all the years. Counting all the smiles, all the tears. Remembering it all, both the good and bad. Thinking about the times when I was carefree and glad. Memories flood in, vivid as can be. Everything's there in all the pictures I see. Like that time I lost my favorite sandals Or blowing out all those beautiful birthday candles. Pictures pasted and taped onto the pages of white. Time passing; night following day, day following night. Teachers, neighbors, pets, family, and friends. The long winters and the summers that seemed to never end. Oh so many people growing up and getting older. All the different seasons, warmer and colder. School, home, parties, vacations, and holidays. Al the people who are nestled in my heart to stay. The pictures show that life can be hard to handle, But year after year I'm blowing out one more birthday candle.

—Lian Parsons, VI

A hate story

it. This is a simple compilation of all the different possibilities.
1. Write a note declaring your feelings (in Latin class of course)
"That's not for you."
"Whatever, I'm reading it."
"This looks likebed!"
"Excuse me?! It says 'what is the math homework'!"
"I'm going to reject your advances, lookit here you are in bed ALONE."
2. Tell him you don't hate him, thus implying with your clever litotes that you love him.
"I strongly dislike you."
"Thank you."
3. Offer him food as a sign of your affection
"Can I have some?"
"No."
4. Attempt to convince him that he's in love with another man
"See this is what you really want to say to him- ahem, 'Oh, Nick, you're so manly and good atLatin, I just don't know what to do with myself!"
"When did I ever say THAT?"

"You didn't, it's IMPLIED."

"Implied from what? All I did was ask for his dictionary."

"UM, in a super flirty sort of way! Who needs to touch someone while asking to borrow



something? I don't go, oh, Chris, let me borrow your pencil, touch touch!"

- 5. Shower him with attention and compliment his appearance
- "Do you like my haircut?"
- "NO. You look even worse than normal. I didn't think that was possible."
- "Why are you so mean to me?"
- "Mean? I'm nothing but nice to you!"
- 6. Introduce him to your closest friend
- "Well, what do you think?"
- "What do I think? He is a GOD."
- "What? No. No. I only introduced you so you can see for yourself how much of a nutcase he is! God? That's highly offensive...he's more of a camel. Camel god, maybe, but-
- "No, you've got him all wrong. He's so amazing! He knows everything! I flatter him so much, but he deserves it, you know when I asked him—"

He's not good enough for her. I think it's because she loves him that I hate him so much. We've been best friends for so long and she deserves more than an arrogant, awkwardly tall, angular, pompous, narcissistic bigot. She worships the ground he tramples over and I count the minutes until he prances off do to something even more girly.

- 6. Discuss his attributes with your friends
- "He's so smart." She coos.
- "Yeah. A smartass."
- "What? No! Anyway, he's also very manly."
- "Yeah. WO-manly."
- "Tall-"
- "...and bulimic-"
- "Cute "
- "...to under-developed monkeys maybe."

"He's so amazing, why can't you see that?"

I'm just afraid that he'll take her away and then turn her into that perfect cute little suburban housewife who I'll never see outside the grocery store. I'm afraid he's going to ruin all her crazy dreams of tea shops and carrot farms and she'll be forced to lose sight of things that make her who she is. I'm afraid he'll take her and ruin her. Ruin what makes her so special and happy and he's just not good enough for her. He's not good enough to give everything up for.

7. Smile at him

"Why are you glaring at me?"

"I don't know; why AM I glaring at you?"

I strongly dislike him. I'm upset with him. I argue with him. I never listen to him. I complain about him every chance I get. I have never and will never declare anything remotely resembling affection for him.

So why does everyone keep telling me it's me who's in love with him?

*Note: The author is much too lazy to write out thirty steps. Um. Just pretend.

-Lisa Wang, II

...A N D SWAY

Freedom's changed us.

Made us symptoms of the sickness in the sea

Profound and bottomless, swaddled by waves and the hands of the stronger men

The coldest hands I've ever held.

We're changed
As bathing in fire for too long will inevitably change a person
Searing we light up again
Blowing smoke rings
In
And
Out
Now we're high but lower than before.
The clouded air suffocates our logic and ration and wit

The clouded air suffocates our logic and ration and wit
We breathe our last breaths with gumption.

He was a man of the midnight sun

Tipped hat on the shores of wonderland,
He swam through her golden hair because it was softer and cooler than the sea
Told her to look for the moon because he craved to slide it down her finger
Just once
The moon so Big and Bright and Bold
Like her smile that made him age too quickly
And he watched her sleep because he couldn't himself.
Limbs entangled in patchwork
Swirled together like cinnamon and sugar
Strung out
...And sway.

-Aoife O'Flaherty, I



Linoleum Print Michaela Bosch, III

Dancing Gypsy, Markers Ivana Ivanova, IV and legal of her feel which Whitel Malaller (com rule delan) Was all by

Wait.

She always found him sitting on her porch
And she loved him for the slow days
When he would wait for her with his hat tipped low
Enough to soak up the sun but no enough to get burned
And she would take just as much time as she needed
They were just going to hold hands out by the fields anyway
It wasn't anything much
She took her time applying blush and lipstick and whatever girls do
He didn't even notice it
She was beautiful enough

She always found him sitting on her porch
And she loved him for the slow steps
When he would stand for her with a charming bow
Enough to acknowledge her but not enough to insult
And she would take just as much time as she needed
They were just going to embrace under the stars anyway
It wasn't anything much
She took her time soaking night and darkness and whatever girls do
He didn't even notice it
She was beautiful enough

She always found him sitting on her porch
And she loved him for the slow breaths
When he would sing for her with his good voice low
Enough to just comfort her but not enough to forget
And she would take just as much time as she needed
They were just going to dream down on the porch swing anyway
It wasn't anything much
She took her time crying joy and regret and whatever girls do
He didn't even notice it
She was beautiful enough

She had an expiration date And she would take just as much time as she needed Before the sun surrendered to moon And he let her

She was beautiful enough



La Pelouse à Strasbourg, Photograph Marcelle Goggins, II

Lights

The lights have struck again. Before my watery eyes shimmery silvers dance frighteningly Oh so cruel in their joy.

Every painful pounding note cracks my head And the pulsing flickers creep slyly over my pupils, The stain they form growing larger by the minute.

And as gasoline rainbows cloud my vision I struggle to keep your face in my thoughts. Remembering how you explode into a million shades when you see me.

Keep you by me as the lights devour my eyes.

-Adrianna Lasso-Harrier, III



Hidden Values, Acrylic on canvas Amanda Yu, II

The Life Not Your Own

That sparkle in your eyes begins to disappear. You slowly lose yourself in the rat race called life, The world that is hell.

As you feel the pressure to be the golden one, You are scared to let people down, For what you worked your whole life for Is slowly coming to an end, And no matter how hard you try, You cannot regain control.

As your parents brag about your success,
You can feel the pressure to succeed.
How proud they are of you,
How you will do so much more than they ever could,
And they tell you this constantly,
If the pressure was not high enough already.

You are not just living for yourself, For you are what they raised. You are what they tried so hard to make succeed. You are the promised one in a family of lowlifes and lies, Where you are the only one that can make it out alive, With your mind still intact.

All you can see is your life crashing in around you,
More and more every day.
The walls are closing in on you.
The dreams of others suffocating you in the ever-shrinking room,
As you focus on their dreams for you,
Instead of your dreams for yourself.

You do not want the praise.
You do not want the glory.
You just want to follow your own dreams,
But you are torn between the path of your own choosing
And the path that has been planned out since your birth.

Trying to please everyone, When you cannot even please yourself.

Ashley Waters, II



Mountains, Photograph Beata Coloyan, II



We, are the forgotten
Those, left alone of street corners
No longer remembered or cared for
Just memories, memories of long ago

We, are the disillusioned Those dismal dreamers who dream no longer Hopes scattered and dreams torn apart Broken, and left to die

We, are the starving But our starvation is double fold For we starve not only of lack of food We starve of lack of soul

We, are the living dead Soulless husk waiting for death's final act Never given to, but much has been taken away Living with nothing to live for We can not afford to dream

Yes, we are they
Every one of us scared with nothing to hope for
Can you, can you see our tears, lying just beneath the surface
Go ahead and search you can find them if you focus

Tears, holding so much, tears filled with such sorrow Yet we, are still America And we, are still the World And we, are still Human, just hoping to be heard

Living, with nothing to live for We can not afford to dream Yet, we wish to be heard But all we can do is scream

We hope you will listen to our screams We hope our voices will be heard We hope you will pay attention And our request will be adhered We do not have the strength to fight
Or the freedom to speak out change
All we can do is scream as loudly as we can
And hope with all our heart, and souls that our screams will be heard

We scream with voices shrill and rough as sand paper But our screams resonate with soul Screaming for a better tomorrow, screaming for a better today Screaming for a chance, a chance to hope this day

Our screams come from all corners of the World From the shrieks of the slums of Richmond, California To Mother Africa's daily pleads We yelp from Communist Russia and we pray from Islamic Iran

Our screams may sound quite different But the meanings are the same We scream for help, we scream for hope, and we scream when it's all that's left For all we can do is scream and scream till our screams are one day heard

-Emmanuel Oppong-Yeboah, III

Insanissimo

Sing, talk the featherless owl Swimming in the good earth Take flight visit my center Tainted and painted, purple sounds Crashing the platforms holding naught But all and not again at all Take from them, the masters Black eyed fools all, some knowledge A haunting of Elysium takes, The breath of a hero away Yet seize this pen and fill it with graphite and blood And stomp along softly on all memories of tomorrow The children will know, if not turn them into adults and despair at the new fighters for peace and killers for all the saved the black sheep meets the white and love is born, hard hate harder and harder, the soft whisper a scar of pure pleasure slowly and surely black out into the light and take them, the heights unreached into the same insanity that ground paste in my mind another sanctuary of thought, and measure defiled into the other. So I leave the reader All haughty and critical Staring at my broken creed And despair.

-Rich Liang, H



Watercolor, Charcoal, Colored Pencil, Ink Natalie Nowell, V

ESSAY ON A **SIGN**

Signs are important in my eyes. They're the most eye-catching (and subsequently, striking) methods of describing an individual or a group of people. The viewer does not get lost in a rambling jungle of an essay, and he doesn't get swamped in a mind-numbing deluge of a speech. A good sign represents an entity in its entirety, leaving no doubt what the entity stands for. It transcends the dazzling display of color as the leaves of a tree, transforming instead into the dull brown roots, anchoring the entity firmly with a set of ideals.

More often than not, signs have degenerated in a major way. Across the street of my old house, a massive rectangular double-sided billboard stands above a pizza store, and similar to the store, it has always been changing. Ads promoting Heineken, ads stressing "Don't drive drunk," ads promoting cigarettes, Jeep Wranglers, and far too many other products to list, and occasionally even standing stark naked, a blight upon its surroundings. But just as the pizza store has always been in the business of selling pizza (whether as Angelos, Spanky's or Sabatinos), the billboard has always had the same intention of conveying a commercial message, and to obtain money.

Corporate logos have manifested themselves everywhere, pasted firmly on many of these billboards and even plastered onto the jerseys of professional athletes, always modifying and always multiplying. Companies look to etch their name on something, anything, even the TD Banknorth Garden (or even the Fleet Center), as long as they can make a (few million) dollar(s) or two. But such signs are meaningless, pseudo-signs, worthy of none of the 700 Billion being tossed liberally in their direction so that the can put their pseudosigns on more pieces of property, in a sign of arbitrary ownership. In this age of material wealth and impersonal corporations, it is unique to see a single corporate logo take on a higher significance as a representative of an entire city, but this is exactly what the Citgo sign is to the city of Boston. Despite its suspect origins, it stands as a stoic testament to what signs are truly supposed to represent.

The sign has been standing in its current position near the Kenmore area since before I was born, and has not been removed or overhauled. Boston has been rock-steady throughout its 400 year old history, always the moral compass and education hub of America. It casts its attention-seeking glow out to demand attention, as the site of early Revolutionary sentiment, as the central meeting-point for abolitionist activity, and as a major city of commerce and business, and it does not want to be forgotten for its past deeds and future promise.

While at the same time, the alternating color schemes of the Citgo sign (a white backdrop dissolving into a black one, only to fade to white again) symbolizes a city marked by distinct contrasts. Puritan morality turns into the drunken mob that hosted the Boston Tea Party, and then into the Roman Catholic Church (while being the largest city where gay marriage is legalized). The same city that published *The Liberator* gets bogged down in a busng crisis



Portrait, Pencil, Ink David Magrass, II

over a hundred years later. The city with a horrendous public school system is the site of the oldest school in the nation, one of the finest in America. Boston is simply multi-faceted and rich with oddities that have defined the complexion of its structure and of the personality of its citizenry.

Many times I have driven back home past the Citgo sign, marveling at its radiance in the night-time sky. I have pondered at its depths, probed for its essence, and in the process, perhaps I've discovered my essence. I'm the system full of contradictions. I'm the one who leaves people scratching their heads, wondering how stupid I could be one minute, and then within five minutes wondering at how I came up with that incredible statement. On the bus in the morning, you can find me immmersed in prayers to Lord Ganesh, but on the bus in the afternoon, you can hear me "bumping" hardcore gangsta rap, profanities and drug references and all. Much like the city of Boston, much like the Citgo sign, you cannot pin me down with one all-encompassing word, because such a word does not exist in my case.

But upon introspection, I find myself also as stable as the objects that I compare myself to. I am proud of my origins, proud of my beliefs, and I'm willing to let the whole world understand that. Am I a bit cocky? Sure, but what sports fan in this region isn't? And the image of sports is fitting, conjuring up images of the Red Sox that play adjacent to the majestic Citgo sign, as the team moves forward, the city moves forward, and the corporate logo (is Citgo the corporation even alive anymore?) that truly fits the definition of an ideal sign continues to illuminate the night sky, an inspiration to all its residents, including myself.

-Sanchay Jain, II



Stencil, Acrylic Allison Myers, II

page

The pen sits in your wrinkled hand Still as sound in a classical film of Black and white movement It is so easy to deliver To a parched audience Who keeps laughter Suspended in the corners Of their eyes and mouths Like tame horses waiting, muscles taut Clenched in anticipation For the sharp signal Of release Yes, you can run now And I believe you are free After all the paper is blank And the audience will wait, A strong beginning Was never welcomed more

-Maya Nojechowicz, III



Marionettes, Ink, Prismacolor Emily Chen, IV



Sonata in G, Charcoal Faith Zeng, II

maple, oak, and ivy

Tomorrow is her birthday.

It's a funny thing. I think that when we're young, we don't appreciate how easy it all is. And when we're older, we don't remember. Do you remember? That day in a universe of checkered-blanket capes and maple-leaf clouds when you wanted to fly and you could. When underneath that big, old tree, dappled in its warmth and lashings of sunlight, you decided to walk on air and you did. When lying in the grass, you wanted the world to be full of hidden places, and it was.

In the early morning, mist hums like gossamer in the air, filtering the sunlight to a cool suggestion. It's cold, but the fog burns off as I cover more ground, rolling and writing between cars to the rhythm of my breathing I see, I hear, I breathe—I hold the world at arm's length on one frozen fingertip, clinging to the mossy caverns of my mind.

I remember. I remember looking to the asphalt for some sense of that again, years later, when the smiles on our faces came less easily and our trust was bottlenecked to a trickle. And I looked up and I saw her smile and all was not lost.

But then I couldn't remember, and she was gone. Before, years before, in an ocean of ivy and under a thunderhead of oak, I could have willed her back again. I could have ordered that the empty air be once more filled with her swinging hair and her smile, and I'm pretty sure I tried once or twice. But then, I couldn't remember, and her hair became plastered to her head and her smile coated in a varnish of poor pronunciation.

So I went back to the asphalt, and I opened my heart, and somehow she stumbled in.

She was incredible. Her hair bounced, too, but it was lighter and brighter and seemed spun from sunlight. Her smile was brighter too, though looking back I wonder if going without for so long had heightened my senses. I was certainly darker; my cheeks were thinner and my eyes were deeper and I looked at everything now with a lens of malcontent—no good would happen, no good could happen, when that light was shining somewhere else.

But she was glorious. Every words came as song, a thick, caramel arpeggio laced with humor and a twinge of melancholy. Words, that rang with laughter and genius as I'd never known, gave me back the hidden placed in the ivy and the thick carpet of green.

The asphalt skims lightly beneath my wheels, smooth and delicate, like a stream of silk running unbroken through pools of shadow and peninsulas of light.

Still, some treacherous shred of me was counting down the days. The first time I heard her

voice, drained of all its warmth and butter and cream, it didn't shock as perhaps it should. My stomach rose in my throat as she grew smaller in the distance, and I felt my fall when the ground came up to meet me like a reprimanding mother—thought you'd left, did you? Thought it would be that easy? It's never been that easy—not since those days, under the spread of the maple trees.

Paradise was over; Eden was no more, and when she looked at me with apology in her eves, the maple trees behind her crackled and burned.

Her parents could finally own a house. The mountains were beautiful. The school was draining the sunshine from her soul.

All true things, but none of it rang true. I should have seen it in the distance—a shred of me did. But no matter what gauzy excuse she gave, I saw the truth buried in her chocolate eyes: she was terrified. She felt the winter coming and she saw the frost growing slowly in corners of her eyes, threatening her fragile feathers with its brittle, unbending approach, and she heard tell of a far-off oak where maybe the cold would not reach her. She looked for me in the air where I had been, but I was shattered and astray—and the sun went out of my life. When she left, it was with tears for everything but me.

I might have stopped her. I could have called her from the ground, from my nest of broken feathers, and if I had she might have stayed. But I opened my mouth to cry and I forgot how easy it should be the air was thick in my throat and my teeth were heavy and my jaw was stiff. I couldn't remember, and hating her for a reason I could not name, I had no tears for her. I played my part; I walked in late that night to the disappointed faces of my parents, and I went upstairs and curled against my wall in resignation. But I had no tears.

My eyes water with the glassy sting of cold—the sun breaks free of restraint and sends shards of its filtered beauty into my face.

Tomorrow is her birthday, and it's one year ago today that a golden bird flew out of my life. For a year, I've search for songbirds in the tree and I have hummed myself to sleep.

Tomorrow is her birthday.

I'm distracted; the usual route is pitted with cars appearing out of air and disappearing into my peripherals. Past the roads paved with inky, confusing shadows and the path seeded with people everywhere I want to be, I fall into a rhythm. I think to the beat of the turning wheels; I carry my thoughts like a mantle across my shoulders.

Life goes on, you know? The forever I offered her belongs to someone else now – just another installment. So young and yet so cynical, I laugh to myself; but I watch his feet and wait for him to walk out the door.

Everywhere I turn now there's someone blocking my view of the maple trees—but no one



Sunset, Aerylic on canvas Kevin Wu, I

blocks the ringing of the birdsong in my ears, no one stops the sun from shining in my eyes, and no one promises of ivy anymore. I stop at a crosswalk.

This intersection's bad—rapids of angry nine-to-five-ers realizing they have 3 minutes to stay that way shout obscenities at their windows and feel too much in an instant. It's dangerous, but strangely soothing. This river never alters course—these people are always angry, and always here—and there's comfort to be found in that. I have time; I stop, I sit, I think. I see her, suddenly, embossed against the sky.

Maybe it was the light, but to my eyes she looked like Eve; brown sugar and burnt caramel and primal in her beauty—shimmering in her core I saw a dappling of green. I heard a bird sing out from somewhere deep within her face. Then she moved slightly to the left—the sun splintered off her hips and no longer did she promise my salvation, but against gold leaf hammered haphazard on a steel-wool sky, a stranger smiled at me and in her eyes I saw the trees.

-Olivia Schwob, II

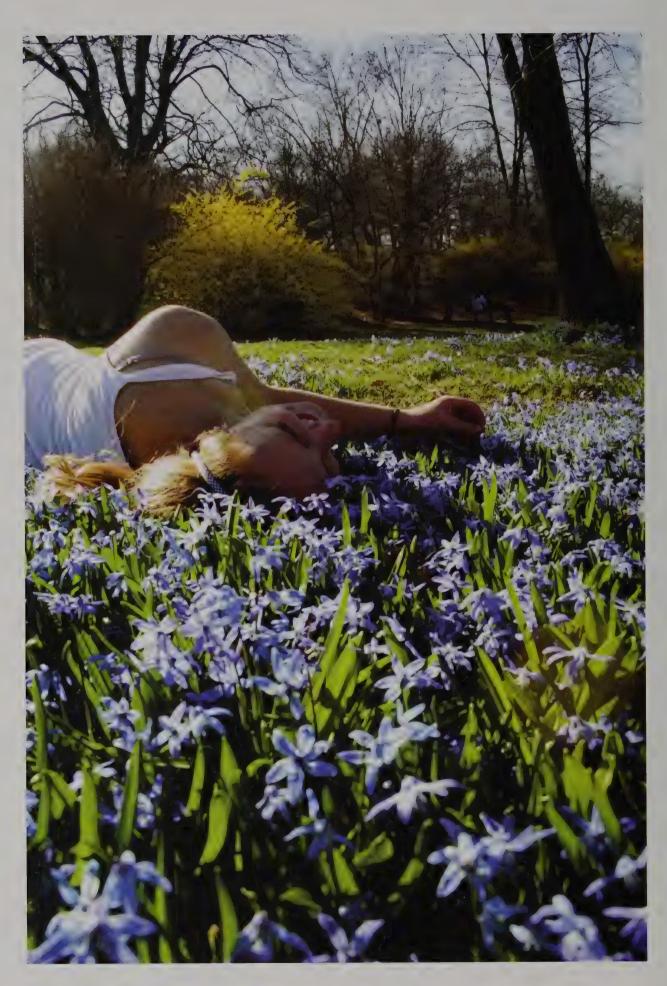


Watercolor on Chinese cardboard Yunwei Sun, II

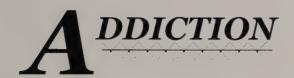
Nothing

The room is narrow and empty and cold the air breathes cigarette smoke and the walls smell like dirt her little mistakes lay strewn around her little scrunched up balls of paper, they missed the wastebasket and ended up in her eyes instead she used to have wings, when things were beautiful and the world always smelled of sunshine but that was a long time ago, and now it's fuzzy in her mind. Now her blood's all hyped up on Failure. She tried so hard to make sure that She'd never be anyone's little girl And now she wishes she could be, Cause life gets all empty and screwed up When you're nobody's little girl. I guess she just got trapped In dark school hallways and always looking at books Filled with information when all she wanted Was to soak up the sun and the stars and always be A little bit muddy. Now all she wants is to wash the gunk out of her eyes And sleep.

Elizabeth Mahony, III



Girl in Grass, Photograph Hazel Manko, I



Scratch her name on the bathroom stall Write it all over my bedroom wall I can never shake her sting, her touch I can never feed my thirst, never enough

Draw some blood, feels oh so swell Love, love, like a burning hell I know, I know, I'm being used I know, I know, I am abused

Say what you want, be what you will A smeared salt line, o'er my window sill Maybe you won't get in, maybe you won't find me Maybe for one night, you'll let me be

I can feel, I can see, my skin starts to crawl Maybe tonight could be the end of it all I can feel your touch, now upon my skin I can't deal with this addiction, can't repent for this sin

I push it away, it always finds its way back Tearing at my soul, always on the attack Simplicity clarity, escape my fleeting thoughts Chaos and a crash, a love that can be bought

—Anonymous



Flames, Acrylic on canvas Winnie Chen, II

ALL

Everyone talks about me.
The trees surf in the waves of the wind,
Whirling worthless leaves like a tsunami.
Branches swaying like a distorted trapeze,
But do you see the picture they are painting for me?

FOR ME

Everyone talks about me.

The sparrows, and eagles, and finches collide,

Exchanging microscopic seeds at the highest altitude of our troposphere, Resting their petite delicate skulls on accumulated condensation beneath the sun. But do you taste the bitterness they are feeding to me?

Everyone talks about me.

The guitar strums a luminous chord to the piano, And the ebony tickles the ivory who replies. Together with the screeching of the violins, they sing a symphony. But do you hear the harmonies they are playing for me?

Everyone talks about me.

The waitress saunters over to my unbound temporary territory, And asks me what I'd like to eat sounding rather derogatory. Slips behind the 3-foot-high counter again and slits bacon while mumbling Verbatim to her friend, her friend who will never hear the end. But do you smell the aroma of what she's cooking for me?

Everyone talks about me.

The ink and the lead fight over the opportunity to exercise their aching muscles today, Who will get to scrape the unmarked tree first and mark their territory? I only have the ability to steer them, I cannot lead them. But do you feel the emotions that they're thinking of me?

-Elideusa Gomes-Almeida, IV

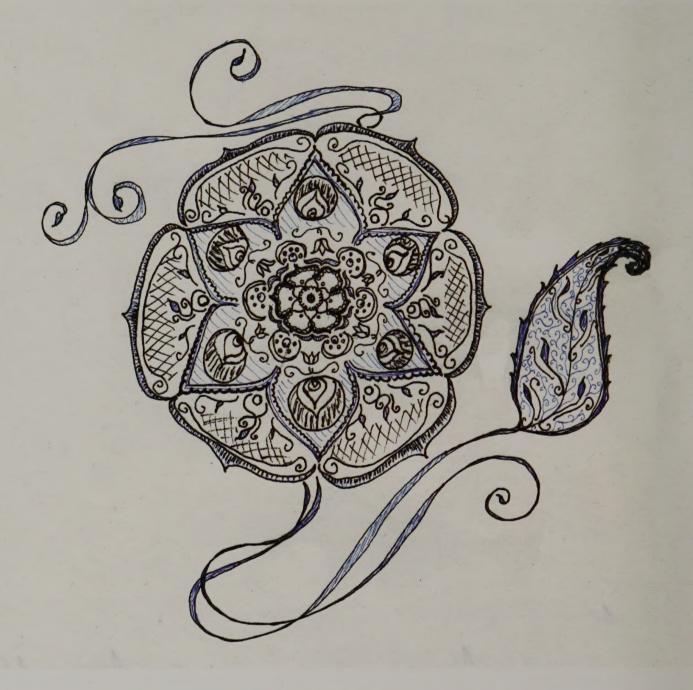


Watercolor on Chinese cardboard Yunwei Sun, II

Shelter

I found her writing a letter To his heart. Best friends and Worst enemies no longer knew What kind of rain Drizzled their everydays. Either way, these gray castles Make her hair so soft, light up Her face and remind the world To remember her eyes. Love separates truth from nontruth (lies remain elusive) But never in a way that makes Sense, nonsense, madness Her convoluted thoughts retreat To insanity, the haven of Organized chaos as opposed to the SANE disorganized chaos Of traffic lights and friends and enemies And juries and great bustling cities And humanity and superiority. Her paper went up in flames And her painstaking words melted To Dante's *Inferno*, Christian fires of Blasphemy, heresy, nonconformity, righteousness. It's my honest truth, she said. Fingering the wooden cross around her neck. What's yours?

—Elizabeth Mahony, III



Micron Pen Allison Myers, I



